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President Clinton
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, DC 20500

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August 24, 1999

Dear President Clinton,

I am writing to you because of my growing concerns about genetically engineered foods. My concerns have grown out of a recent visit to Europe where they seem to be much better informed on the subject than we are. For instance I learned that a UK scientist Dr. Arpad Pusztai found that when he fed GE potatoes to rats they had a brain reduction of 15% and damage to their organs. He used the E.coli, cauliflower mosaic virus as a promoter to activate the gene, which is used in 90% of GE crops. Also, the results from laboratory tests at Cornell University regarding the Monarch butterfly is another reason for concern.

As you know, we know relatively little about DNA and do not fully understand the knock on effects when introducing new genes in this way. 50 million acres of GE crops were planted in the US in 1998 and who knows how many acres in 1999. 50% of soya is genetically engineered, which is in much of the food that we eat. How did we let it get so big with so many questions still unanswered?

I have already had information and a letter from Mr. John Marzilli from the FDA in Stoneham, MA, but I am still not convinced that enough research has been conducted.

At the moment I have no confidence that the government is putting the public and environment first. It seems to me that the situation is escalating out of control, and that the large biotech companies are in the driving seat.

I would like to see :

- more independent research from scientists with no vested interest in the Biotech companies,
- elimination of GE products in our supermarkets until full research has been conducted,
- no GE crops grown, except for experiments, until we understand the effects,
- labeling of GE products, while they are still on the market, so that the consumer can make a choice for themselves and their children,
- and more public education of the pros and cons of genetic engineering.

We as a world are on the cusp of a new technology that if handled well could perhaps be a benefit to us all, but if handled in a greedy rush could be a health hazard and ecological disaster. You are in a very privileged position, you are probably the most influential person in the world, you can help guide the pace of this situation. I ask you to search deeply into the right way to proceed. If we abuse this technology today it could have far reaching consequences for many generations to come. Don't let history look back and say that we were too weak to act against the force of greed from the biotech companies. You have shown much strength in your presidency, on a personal level as well as a leader. I believe that if you have the will you are the one person in this world that has the power to bring this situation under control. All you need is the will.

I hope sincerely that you find it.

Debbie Triff

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